

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

- 1 1. A cervical collar comprising:
 - 2 a front collar portion having a chin support portion and generally conforming
 - 3 to the neck, shoulders, and mandible of a wearer, the front collar portion being
 - 4 fabricated from a soft flexible material; and
 - 5 a lateral reinforcing support member disposed in the neck region below the
 - 6 mandible bone of the wearer, the support member being fabricated from a
 - 7 substantially incompressible material.
- 1 2. The cervical collar of claim 1, wherein the support member has a generally
- 2 rectangular shape forming a plate.
- 1 3. The cervical collar of claim 2, wherein the plate is substantially flat.
- 1 4. The cervical collar of claim 3, wherein the support plate has at least one rounded
- 2 corner.
- 1 5. The cervical collar of claim 4, wherein the at least one rounded corner engages the
- 2 mandible of the wearer for limiting the rotating of the wearer's neck.
- 1 6. The cervical collar of claim 5, wherein the support plate is positioned parallel to
- 2 the wearer's jawbone.

- 1 7. The cervical collar of claim 1, wherein the support member is fabricated from a
2 lightweight and rigid material for providing sufficient lateral support to the wearer's
3 head.
- 1 8. The cervical collar of claim 1, wherein the front collar portion is fabricated from a
2 foam material.
- 1 9. The cervical collar of claim 1, wherein the support member is attached to the front
2 collar portion with at least one rivet.
- 1 10. The cervical collar of claim 9 further comprising a fabric fastener for connecting
2 the front collar half to a rear collar half, and wherein the fabric fastener is attached to
3 the front collar portion with the rivet.
- 1 11. The cervical collar of claim 1, wherein the support member is a plate having at
2 least one rounded corner.
- 1 12. The cervical collar of claim 1, wherein the support plate is flat and rectangular.
- 1 13. The cervical collar of claim 12, wherein the support plate is fabricated from a
2 substantially incompressible material.
- 1 14. The cervical collar of claim 11, wherein a plurality of the support plates are
2 provided to increase the lateral support.
- 1 15. The cervical collar of claim 1, wherein the support member is a plate having at
2 least one rounded corner.
- 1 16. The cervical collar of claim 1, wherein the support member has a color which is
2 indicative of a material property of the support member.

1 17. The cervical collar of claim 1, wherein a plurality of the support members are
2 provided, at least one support member being provided for each lateral side of the
3 wearer's neck.

1 18. A method of exercising neck muscles comprising:

2 providing a cervical collar comprising a front collar portion having a chin
3 support portion and generally conforming to the neck, shoulders, and mandible of a
4 wearer, the front collar portion being fabricated from a soft flexible material; and a
5 lateral reinforcing support member disposed in the neck region below the mandible
6 bone of the wearer, the support member being fabricated from a substantially
7 incompressible material;

8 applying the cervical collar to a wearer's neck; and

9 moving the wearer's head to one side to strengthen the wearer's neck muscles
10 against the resistance provided by the lateral support member.

1 19. A method of fitting a cervical collar comprising the steps of:

2 providing a cervical collar comprising a front collar portion having a chin
3 support portion and generally conforming to the neck, shoulders, and mandible of a
4 wearer, the front collar portion being fabricated from a soft flexible material;

5 fitting a lateral reinforcing support member to the front collar portion in the
6 neck region below the mandible bone of the wearer, the support member being
7 fabricated from a substantially incompressible material;

8 testing the lateral support provided by the lateral support member;

9 fitting at least one additional lateral support members to the front portion
10 depending upon the results of the test.